

MASSACHUSETTS COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND

**COMPREHENSIVE ANNUAL INDEPENDENT LIVING SOCIAL
SERVICES PLAN**

OCTOBER 1, 2010 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30, 2011

**Janet LaBreck
Commissioner**

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB) is a comprehensive rehabilitation agency with a broad mandate (M.G.L. Chapter 6, Section 29) to provide Independent Living and rehabilitation services to over 35,000 blind citizens of the Commonwealth. Social and Rehabilitative Services are designed to increase independence and to overcome the physical, psychological, social and economic problems that may accompany blindness. The focus of MCB is the legally blind* consumer for whom the agency provides an organizational and programmatic framework for comprehensive services. Within this framework, individual service plans are developed for each legally blind consumer, and services are designed to promote the individual's maximum functioning compatible with his/her individual desires and capabilities for independence. The Commission seeks to promote the full integration of blind persons into the mainstream of the social and economic life of the community.

MCB's service plans encompass a wide range of services that are drawn upon to meet the special needs of each consumer. In keeping with state statutes, the Commission for the Blind maintains a central register of all legally blind persons in Massachusetts.

*** Legal blindness is defined as a visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with corrective lenses or a visual field of 20 degrees diameter or less.**

FUNDING SOURCES FOR THE MASSACHUSETTS COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND

The Commission for the Blind is unlike other Massachusetts Human Service agencies in that it is a comprehensive agency for a special consumer group, the blind. This is possible because MCB derives its major funding under three mandates:

- Financial Assistance-Supplemental Security Income for the Blind under Title XVI of the Social Security Act;**
- Social Services funding under the Social Services Block Grant Act; and**
- Rehabilitation Services funding under the Rehabilitation Act as amended.**

All of these programs are funded partly by the State and partly by the Federal Government.

ASSESSING THE NEEDS AND PLANNING TO MEET THEM

Periodic censuses conducted by the Commission provide another source of information about the service needs of the blind. An open-ended solicitation of needs is administered to approximately 35,000 persons; the needs expressed through this survey include Talking Books, Counseling services, Orientation and Mobility training, Low Vision devices, Rehabilitation Teaching services, and Homemaker services.

An additional step in this planning process is a series of public hearings that are held at several locations across the state to solicit comment on major planning documents. Consumers, other professionals working with the blind and the general public are informed of these hearings and they are invited to participate and air their suggestions at these gatherings.

Using these direct sources of input, the Commission engages in a yearly planning process. Integral to this process are the six regional Consumer Advisory Councils, the Statewide Independent Living Advisory Council, Deaf-Blind\Multihandicapped Advisory Council, Radio Reading Service Advisory Council and the Rehabilitation Council, who formulate their own objectives for the year, as well as reviewing the Agency's objectives. Service delivery, program development, and other regional and program unit activities are monitored quarterly, and in-depth evaluations of specific programs and services are conducted periodically.

Periodically, in-depth studies are requested on programs and patterns of service that have been Commission priorities and these reports also fall under the aegis of Policy.

INDEPENDENT LIVING SOCIAL SERVICES PROGRAMS FOR THE BLIND

MCB is one of two Social Service Block Grant Agencies (the Department of Social Services being the other) in Massachusetts and, as such, is responsible for administering and providing social services to the blind. Independent Living Social Services, as all other services, are delivered

primarily through offices serving six geographic regions.

The Social Services mandate is for the provision of comprehensive social services to a population in need. Although the MCB Independent Living Social Services Program is restricted to a population defined by a single limiting disability - blindness - it is comprehensive in that it is designed to service a wide range of needs for all age groups.

One of the more widely utilized direct Independent Living Social Services is Rehabilitation Teaching. Through this program, consumers learn home management skills that will help them function safely and independently in their homes. Rehabilitation Teachers mark stoves and familiarize consumers with safe cooking techniques as well as products that will allow them greater freedom in their homes.

These skills, combined with an intensive program of personal life management, communication skills such as Braille, and therapeutic recreational activities, enable individuals (particularly elder consumers) to maintain themselves in their own homes.

Orientation and Mobility (O&M) services are one of the Independent Living Social Services offered by the Commission that has been extremely successful in increasing the independence of the legally blind consumer. O&M services provide the consumer with skills such as orientation to home and place of employment, cane technique, use of public transportation, and other techniques so that he or she may learn to travel as well as a sighted person.

Rehabilitation Teaching, Orientation and Mobility, and Library Services are but three of the many Independent Living Social Services that the Commission will provide during the Federal Fiscal Year 2011 (October 2010 through September 2011). The following are the list of services to be provided; detailed descriptions of these services can be found in the directory of services:

PRIMARY SERVICES

**Adjustment to Blindness Training
Adaptive Software
Adaptive Software and Personal Computers for Blind Children
Adult Day Health Care Service
Advocacy
Case Management
Counseling
Deaf-Blind Community Access Network Services
Diagnostic & Evaluation
Flexible Family Supports
Homemaker Services*
Information and Referral
Interpreter Services
Orientation and Mobility
Recreation/Campership Services
Rehabilitation Teaching
Respite Care
Socialization Services for Legally Blind School -Age Children
Transportation**

***For consumers under the age of 60; those 60 years of age and older are referred to The Executive Office of Elder Affairs - Home Care Corporation for this service.**

SUPPORT SERVICES

Assistive Listening Devices

Low Vision Aids/Devices

TITLE XX GOALS

Registrants of the Commission are eligible for services if the services are aimed at meeting one or more of the following goals:

- (1) achieving or maintaining economic self-support to prevent, reduce, or eliminate dependency;**
- (2) achieving or maintaining self-sufficiency, including reduction or prevention of dependency;**
- (3) preventing or remedying neglect, abuse or exploitation of children and adults unable to protect their own interests, or preserving, rehabilitating, or reuniting families;**
- (4) preventing or reducing inappropriate institutional care by providing for community-based care, home-based care, or other forms of less intensive care; or**
- (5) securing referral or admission for institutional care when other forms of care are not appropriate, or providing services to individuals in institutions.**

CHILDREN'S SOCIALIZATION/RECREATION PROGRAMS

MCB in cooperation with community organizations across the state offers programs of socialization/recreation services for legally blind children 3-12 years of age. The programs operate when school is not in session. Among the activities are basketball, table top games, swimming, crafts, various ball games, and field trips. The purpose of the program is not only to provide the children with recreational activities that will be satisfying in themselves, but also to assist them to develop social, recreation, and psycho-motor skills which may increase the potential for their inclusion in activities with their sighted peers.

RADIO READING SERVICES

The Commission provides funds to support programming for a statewide network of Radio Reading Services (RRS) for the blind and print handicapped in Massachusetts. The RRS provides the reading of daily newspapers, current magazines, shopping guides, best selling books, and other material previously available only in print format. Talk shows on topics of special interest to the visually impaired, information about community activities, and employment news are also a part of the programming on RRS.

SERVICE ELIGIBILITY

In order to receive services from MCB, an individual must be legally blind and be in need of MCB services for achievement of a specified goal. For some services, the consumer must

meet certain financial eligibility requirements as well. If a consumer indicates interest in receiving services, MCB direct service workers will advise the consumer of the services and benefits for which they may be eligible. Those services offered without regard to income are Advocacy, Case Management, Counseling, Directly Provided Diagnostic & Evaluation, Information and Referral, Interpreter Services, Orientation and Mobility, Rehabilitation Teaching, Socialization Services for Legally Blind School -Age Children, Deaf-Blind Community Access Network Services.

Services which are subject to financial eligibility requirements include Adaptive Software, Adjustment to Blindness Training, Adult Day Health Care, Diagnostic & Evaluation, Flexible Family Supports, Homemaker, Recreation/Campership Services, Respite Care, Support Services, and Transportation. These services can only be purchased for a consumer by MCB if the consumer meets the Commission's financial eligibility requirements for Independent Living Social Services.* Because of funding limitations, the provision of services is subject to the availability of funds.

FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR SOCIAL SERVICES

1. Without Regard to Income:

The following services will be provided without regard to income:

Adaptive Software and Personal Computers for Blind

Children, Advocacy, Case Management, Counseling, Directly Provided Diagnostic & Evaluation, Information & Referral, Interpreter Services, Orientation & Mobility, Rehabilitation Teaching, and Socialization Services for Legally Blind School-Age Children, Deaf-Blind Community Access Network Services, and services provided toward the goal of preventing or remedying neglect, abuse or exploitation of the blind.

2. Current Recipients of Income Maintenance Payments:

Any consumer eligible for one of the following income maintenance programs is also financially eligible for all Independent Living Social Services:

- **Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TANF)**
- **Supplemental Security Income - Aid to the Blind (SSI-BI)**
- **Supplemental Security Income - Disability Assistance (SSI-DI)-Supplemental Security Income - Old Age Assistance (SSI-OA)**

3. Income Eligibility:

Other consumers whose income does not exceed the levels listed below may be eligible for purchased independent living social services.

FAMILY SIZE	MAXIMUM GROSS MONTHLY INCOME	MAXIMUM GROSS ANNUAL INCOME
1.	\$1,806	\$21,672
2.	\$2,430	\$29,160
3.	\$3,052	\$36,624
4	\$3,676	\$44,112
5.	\$4,300	\$51,600
6.	\$4,922	\$59,064
7.	\$5,546	\$66,552

A family member is defined as a spouse or any child under 18 related by blood or law to the consumer and residing in the same household with the consumer unless the consumer is claimed as a dependent for income tax purposes by another person. The financial eligibility requirement may be waived with the approval of the Regional Director and the Deputy Commissioner for Services when they find that an emergency or extraordinary circumstances warrant such a waiver.

4. Eligibility Determination Process:

Application made through MCB will be processed through the following steps:

- **Determination of legal blindness by MCB Register and registration of the individual as legally blind.**
- **Filing of an application for services with the MCB office. A worker will be available to explain services to the applicant either in the office or in the applicant's home:**
 - **the services available in the community**

- the eligibility requirements
 - the application form and the types of information requested on the form
 - the rights and obligations of the applicants
- Completion, signing and dating of the application form. The worker will help the consumer fill out the form if necessary.
- Consumer will also be requested to sign a Voluntary Release of Information form at the time of application for services.
- Income information beyond that of categorical eligibility will not be sought from recipients of TANF or SSI.
- Notification to the applicant in regard to his/her eligibility or ineligibility for participation in the services program. This notification will include information about the individual's right to a fair hearing.
- Development of a service plan for eligible persons and delivery of services in accordance with this plan.
- Notification to eligible persons when the services requested are not available, which includes procedures to be followed for registering for waiting lists so that the applicant may receive the services when they become available.
- If requested, the worker will explore with the consumer the possibility of alternate services when the service

requested is not available.

5. Redetermination: Redetermination of a person's income eligibility shall be made by MCB in the following cases:

- **After each one year period of services.**
- **Within thirty days of receipt of information regarding changes in the consumer's financial status that may render the consumer ineligible.**
- **When required on the basis of information received about anticipated changes in a consumer's financial status that may make him/her ineligible.**

(4) Financial eligibility redetermination will be made in the following ways:

- **For TANF and SSI recipients - use of a current Medicaid card.**
- **For income eligible consumers (including MA-only) - declaration of gross monthly income.**

The Deputy Commissioner for Services may waive the income eligibility guidelines listed here, upon documentation that the consumer/family is experiencing extraordinary financial hardship.

ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Some of the Commission's purchased services have, in

addition to the financial eligibility requirements, certain other criteria.

Orientation and Mobility

A medical evaluation is required prior to initiation of services. If a consumer is determined, after evaluation by an orientation and mobility instructor to be unable to benefit from the service, further instruction will not be provided.

Homemaker Services

Medical documentation regarding consumer's physical capacity must be submitted prior to initiation of services. In emergency situations this can be postponed at the discretion of the Regional Director

Respite Care

To be eligible to receive this service, families/primary care givers of legally blind individuals under age 60 cannot be eligible for respite care services from the Department of Mental Retardation or Social Services, or, if they are eligible, they must have expended the maximum numbers of days available under that agency's funding. This service is limited to a maximum of 48 hours per quarter (not to exceed 168 hours per year); however, if extraordinary circumstances are present, the Deputy Commissioner has the authority to waive the limit.

Support Services

These services - assistive listening devices, evaluations, and low vision aids, (evaluations and devices) - may be purchased on behalf of a legally blind consumer only when the following conditions have been met:

- **The consumer has had a low vision or hearing evaluation by a qualified physician, optometrist or audiologist and the physician, optometrist or audiologist recommends that the provision of such a device would improve the vision and/or hearing of the consumer.**
- **The consumer is not eligible under Title XIX (Medicaid) or Vocational Rehabilitation; however, the consumer must be within the income limits defined in this plan (see page 10).**
- **The Individual Service Plan must describe how the provision of such device(s) would assist the consumer in achieving his/her highest degree of independent functioning within the limits of his/her disability.**
- **When the acquisition cost of a low -vision device is more than \$300, prior approval must be obtained from the MCB consulting ophthalmologist. If the acquisition cost of the low vision device(s) is less than \$ 300, prior approval must be obtained from the Regional Director.**
- **The service is an integral and subordinate part of one or more primary services.**

NONDISCRIMINATION

It is the policy of this Commission that no person shall be denied services or be discriminated against in the provision of services on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, or handicap.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and Article 114 of the Massachusetts Constitution, the Commission provides reasonable accommodation to enable disabled persons to benefit from its services. For example, interpreter services are provided in order to improve non-English speaking person's ability to access services.

SERVICES TO ALIENS

The Independent Living Social Services Program provides services to United States citizens, and "qualified aliens" as defined in the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW AND FAIR HEARING FOR CONSUMER DENIED SERVICES

MCB provides an Administrative Review and Fair Hearing procedure for those consumers who wish to appeal the denial, reduction or termination of services, or failure of the Commission to act upon a consumer's request with reasonable speed. Applicants or consumers requesting redetermination by the Commission of decisions concerning denial or abridgment of services should write to the Director

of Policy Development, Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, 48 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116, within 30 days of such an action. Consumers or applicants may request a CAPS worker to advise them of their rights in the Fair Hearing procedure.

WHERE TO APPLY FOR SERVICES OR INFORMATION

Application for all services provided by MCB must be made through an MCB office. In addition, persons desiring information about the MCB Independent Living Social Service Plan or MCB services should address their questions to one of the offices listed below:

Central Office

**Massachusetts Commission for the Blind
48 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116
(617) 727-5550* or Toll Free: 1-800-392-6450*
Toll Free: 1-800-392-6556 (TDD Only)**

**Region I Office - Springfield and Western Massachusetts
Massachusetts Commission for the Blind
2nd Floor Room 211
436 Dwight Street, Room 109
Springfield, MA 01103
(413) 781-1220 (V/TDD) or Toll Free: 1-800-332-2772 (V/TDD)**

**Region II Office - Worcester and Central Massachusetts
Massachusetts Commission for the Blind
390 Main Street, Suite 620
Worcester, MA 01608
(508) 727-0522 (V/TDD) or Toll Free: 1-800-392-6450, Ext.**

0522*

**Region III Office - Northeastern Massachusetts
Massachusetts Commission for the Blind
48 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116
(617) 727-5550* or Toll Free: 1-800-392-6450*
Toll Free: 1-800-392-6556 (TDD Only)**

**Region IV Office - Greater Boston except Brookline
Massachusetts Commission for the Blind
48 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116
(617) 727-5550* or Toll Free: 1-800-392-6450*
Toll Free: 1-800-392-6556 (TDD Only)**

**Region V Office - Southeastern Massachusetts
Massachusetts Commission for the Blind
2nd Floor Room 290
800 Purchase Street, New Bedford, MA 02740
(508) 727-0577 (V/TDD) or (508) 993-6140 (V/TDD)
Toll Free 1-800-392-6450, Ext. 0577***

**Region VI Office - Boston and Brookline
Massachusetts Commission for the Blind
48 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116
(617) 727-5550* or Toll Free: 1-800-392-6450*
Toll Free: 1-800-392-6550 (TDD Only)
Or leave message on main number, or Toll Free: 1 -800
392-6450**

*** Voice First, Then TDD**

CLIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM SUPPORT (CAPS)

MCB consumers with concerns regarding services (either from MCB or other public or private agencies) or other issues such as housing, discrimination, or legal rights may contact an MCB CAPS worker who will advise them of their rights and responsibilities and will research the problems to determine the cause. CAPS also identifies problem areas within the MCB service delivery system as documented by patterns of individual complaints and makes appropriate recommendations for changes in policy. In addition, CAPS maintains communications with community and consumer organizations as well as other interested parties to maximize the program's ability to receive input and extend assistance.

INDEPENDENT LIVING SOCIAL SERVICE EXPENDITURES

The estimated expenditures by MCB for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 2010 and ending September 30, 2011 are as follows:

DIRECT SERVICES

Staff	\$2,198,346
Fringe Benefits	628,774
Indirect Costs	380,313
Total:	\$3,207,433

PURCHASED SERVICES

Adaptive Software	45,000
Adaptive Software and Personal Computers for Blind Children	150,000
Adjustment to Blindness Training	136,458
Adult Day Health Care Services	1,000
Deaf-Blind Community Access Network	450,000
Diagnosis & Evaluation	1,184
Flexible Family Supports	115,662
Homemaker Services	242,548
Interpreter Services	15,300
Orientation & Mobility	102,323
Recreation/Camperships	37,164
Respite Care	139,000
Socialization Services for Legally	

Blind School-Age Children	253,500
Support Services and Vision Utilization	
Assistive Listening Devices	
Low Vision Aids/Devices	217,908
Transportation	8492
Total:	\$1,915,539

OTHER

Radio Reading Services	510,000
Staff Training	5,000
Employee Travel	72,000
Rehabilitation Teaching Supplies	74,777
Administrative Charges	32,000
Total:	\$693,777

DIRECTORY

OF

SERVICES

SERVICE: Adaptive Software

DEFINITION: Provision of commercially-available adaptive software designed to meet the needs of legally blind persons who know how to use personal computers, but cannot see well enough to use the computer without adaptive software. Includes initial training in the use of the adaptive software by an agency rehabilitation teacher. The least expensive adaptive software available will be provided. Agency rehabilitation teachers will evaluate that the consumer has sufficient keyboard and computer skills before the provision of the software will be approved.

AVAILABILITY: Availability subject to sufficient agency funds.

ELIGIBILITY: Legally blind consumers who meet the financial eligibility requirements for Independent Living Social Services.

For consumers with a goal of protection from abuse, neglect, or exploitation, this service is provided regardless of income.

WHERE TO APPLY: MCB Regional or Central Offices

METHOD OF DELIVERY: Purchased and direct.

SERVICE: Adaptive Software and Personal Computers for Blind Children

DEFINITION: Provision of commercially -available adaptive software designed to meet the needs of legally blind children aged 11-13 who cannot see well enough to use a computer without adaptive software. A personal computer will also be provided when necessary. Initial training in the use of the adaptive software will be provided to the child. The least expensive adaptive software and personal computer available to meet the child's needs will be provided. The computer and software will be placed in the home only, and are not in lieu of adaptations to be provided by the school. School systems are required to provide any adaptive software and equipment that are necessary for educational purposes. Agency staff will evaluate that the consumer's needs and determine whether the child has the necessary motivation and physical capacity to use the equipment successfully.

AVAILABILITY: Availability subject to sufficient agency funds.

ELIGIBILITY: Legally blind children aged 11-13 years old.

For consumers with a goal of protection from abuse, neglect, or exploitation, this service is provided regardless of income.

WHERE TO APPLY: MCB Regional or Central Offices

METHOD OF DELIVERY: Purchased and direct.

SERVICE: Adjustment to Blindness Training

DEFINITION: Provision of a short-term structured program of adjustment to blindness training designed to meet the needs of legally blind persons who need to learn new skills in areas such as activities of daily living, Braille, or communication.

AVAILABILITY: Availability subject to sufficient agency funds.

ELIGIBILITY: Legally blind consumers who meet the financial eligibility requirements for Independent Living Social Services.

For consumers with a goal of protection from abuse, neglect, or exploitation, this service is provided regardless of income.

WHERE TO APPLY: MCB Regional or Central Offices

METHOD OF DELIVERY: Purchased

SERVICE: Adult Day Health Care Services

DEFINITION: Provision of a structured program of health care and socialization designed to meet the needs of legally blind persons who might otherwise be institutionalized. The services must be provided in a Medicaid -approved Adult Day Health facility and will only be provided to consumers who have been determined to be ineligible for MassHealth.

AVAILABILITY: Availability subject to sufficient agency funds. Limited to a maximum of three (3) days per week of service to each consumer.

ELIGIBILITY: Legally blind consumers who have been determined to be ineligible for MassHealth but who otherwise meet the financial eligibility requirements for Independent Living Social Services.

For consumers with a goal of protection from abuse, neglect, or exploitation, this service is provided regardless of income.

WHERE TO APPLY: MCB Regional or Central Offices

METHOD OF DELIVERY: Purchased

SERVICE: Advocacy

DEFINITION: To advocate for, and help to secure, those resources available outside of the Commission. Includes such activities as advocating in the Chapter 766-TEAM process; assisting the consumer in the application and/or redetermination process for SSI, Medicaid, Food Stamps; working with the Executive Office of Elder Affairs and other State agencies to obtain service for consumers; advocating for and researching availability of housing for consumers; securing Visiting Nurse Association and other Home Care services for consumers; advocating for volunteer services for consumers. Also includes advocating for protective services for elder consumers, and children insuring their protection from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

AVAILABILITY: Statewide

ELIGIBILITY: All legally blind persons who need this service.

WHERE TO APPLY: MCB Regional or Central Offices

METHOD OF DELIVERY: Direct

SERVICE: Case Management

DEFINITION: Coordination of the specialized service components as needed by the consumer and assurance of progress through the rehabilitation process. The professional services of MCB's Independent Living Social Service Staff include case management as an integral activity with consumers.

AVAILABILITY: Statewide

ELIGIBILITY: All legally blind persons who need this service.

WHERE TO APPLY: MCB Regional or Central Offices

METHOD OF DELIVERY: Direct

SERVICE: Counseling

DEFINITION: Assess and identify consumer needs and goals, and provide supportive counseling around the issues of blindness. Referral to outside resources when other issues are present. Designed to assist the individual and/or family unit in attaining the goals specified in the Individual Service Plan.

AVAILABILITY: Statewide

ELIGIBILITY: All legally blind persons who need this service.

WHERE TO APPLY: MCB and Regional or Central Offices.

METHOD OF DELIVERY: Direct

SERVICE: Deaf-Blind Community Access Network Services

DEFINITION: Assess and identify deaf-blind consumer needs for community access and provide personal services to meet those needs including, but not limited to, basic communication, sighted guide and personal accompaniment, assistance with shopping and conducting personal business, and other forms of appropriate, consumer -driven individualized assistance.

AVAILABILITY: Statewide (Subject to sufficient agency funds)

ELIGIBILITY: All legally blind persons who are also deaf and who need this service, upon individualized assessment.

WHERE TO APPLY: MCB Deaf-Blind/Multihandicapped Unit

METHOD OF DELIVERY: Purchased

SERVICE: Medical Evaluation

DEFINITION: Services necessary to establish eligibility or to aid in the development of an appropriate Individual Service Plan. This service can include such evaluations as medical, eye exams, low vision evaluation and follow -up, audiological exams, and occupational therapy evaluations.

AVAILABILITY: Statewide (Subject to sufficient agency funds)

ELIGIBILITY: All legally blind persons who meet the financial eligibility requirements for Independent Living Social Services:

- Recipients of SSI-BI, SSI-DI, SSI-OAA, or TANF.
- Income eligible persons, including persons on Medicaid, whose income is within the MCB limit.

For consumers with a goal of protection from abuse, neglect, or exploitation, this service is provided regardless of income.

WHERE TO APPLY: MCB Regional or Central Offices

METHOD OF DELIVERY: Purchased and Direct

SERVICE: Flexible Family Supports

DEFINITION: Provided to legally blind persons to meet unique, one-time needs for financial assistance or clothing. Examples of the kind of assistance that may be provided are: the purchase of a winter coat or assistance in traveling out of state to attend a family funeral. This service may only be provided once each calendar year to a particular eligible individual.

AVAILABILITY: Statewide, with the following restrictions:

- Subject to sufficient agency funds.
- Similar benefits must be exhausted before the service is provided by MCB.
- Limited to a maximum of \$1,000. If extraordinary circumstances are present, the Deputy Commissioner for Services has the authority to waive this limit.
- May only be provided to an individual once each calendar year.

ELIGIBILITY: Legally blind persons who meet the financial eligibility requirements for independent living social services:

- Recipients of SSI-BI, SSI-DI, SSI-OAA, or TANF
- Income eligible persons, including persons on Medicaid, whose income is within the MCB limit.

For consumers with a goal of protection from abuse, neglect or exploitation, this service is provided regardless of income.

WHERE TO APPLY: MCB Regional or Central Offices

METHOD OF DELIVERY: Purchased and direct

SERVICE: Homemaker

DEFINITION: Provided to legally blind persons under the age of 60 who have a serious medical problem in addition to their blindness that is preventing them from performing necessary homemaking tasks. Services are provided on the basis of priority of need. In order to be determined to be in the highest priority category for this service, a legally blind person must:

- Live alone; or
- live with minor children only; or
- live with another severely disabled adult, who is incapable of performing these tasks, only.
- need assistance in preparing meals, grocery shopping, or laundering clothes.

Other legally blind persons who are eligible for homemaker services will receive them only if sufficient funds are available and based on priority of need as determined by the Commission.

AVAILABILITY:

Statewide, with the following restrictions:

- Subject to sufficient agency funds.
- Similar benefits must be exhausted before the service is provided by MCB.
- Limited to a maximum of four (4) hours per week. If unusual circumstances are present, the Regional

Director has the authority to waive this limit to provide up to six (6) hours per week. If extraordinary circumstances are present, the Deputy Commissioner has the authority to waive this limit.

ELIGIBILITY: Legally blind persons who meet the financial eligibility requirements for independent living social services:

- **Recipients of SSI-BI, SSI-DI, SSI-OAA, or TANF**
- **Income eligible persons, including persons on Medicaid, whose income is within the MCB limit.**
- **Substantial secondary disability**

For consumers with a goal of protection from abuse, neglect or exploitation, this service is provided regardless of income.

WHERE TO APPLY: MCB Regional or Central Offices

METHOD OF DELIVERY: Purchased

SERVICE: Information and Referral

DEFINITION:

Provision of information about available services both internal and external to MCB; includes referral to the most appropriate service. This service is the most widely utilized of all primary Independent Living Social Services and can range from providing a consumer with a brochure of services to identifying the appropriate outside resource, referral to that resource, and follow-up on the services delivered.

AVAILABILITY: Statewide

ELIGIBILITY: All legally blind persons who need the service.

WHERE TO APPLY: MCB Regional and Central Offices

METHOD OF DELIVERY: Direct

SERVICE: Foreign Language Interpreter Services

DEFINITION: Provided to the non-English speaking consumer for purposes of 1) facilitating communication between the consumer and his/her case manager; or 2) enabling the consumer to benefit from other social services provided, whether purchased or directly provided.

AVAILABILITY: Statewide (Subject to sufficient agency funds).

ELIGIBILITY: All legally blind persons who do not speak English and who need the service.

WHERE TO APPLY: MCB Regional and Central Offices

METHOD OF DELIVERY: Purchased and Direct

SERVICE: Interpreter Services

DEFINITION: Provided to the Deaf-Blind/Multihandicapped consumer for purposes of 1) facilitating communication between the consumer and his/her Deaf-Blind/Multihandicapped Services Counselor; or 2) enabling the consumer to benefit from other social services provided, whether purchased or directly provided; 3) facilitating communication for MCB Deaf-Blind/Multihandicapped Unit staff working with Multihandicapped consumer.

AVAILABILITY: Statewide (Subject to sufficient agency funds).

ELIGIBILITY: All legally blind persons with severe hearing impairment who need the service, and MCB Deaf-Blind/Multihandicapped Unit staff who need reasonable accommodation to work with eligible Multihandicapped consumers.

WHERE TO APPLY: CB Deaf-Blind/Multihandicapped Unit - Boston Office

METHOD OF DELIVERY: Purchased

SERVICE: Orientation and Mobility

DEFINITION: Provided to enable the consumer to negotiate his/her environment in a safe and effective manner. Activities may include providing sensory and conceptual training within the home, or immediate environment. Familiarizing consumers with work and home settings; providing consumers with and instructing them in the use of, prescriptive canes and/or mechanical devices suitable to individual needs; instructing consumer in the use of sighted guides; and maximum use of all senses. For registrants residing in institutional settings a consultant is available to introduce staff of the facility with issues surrounding Orientation and Mobility for blind residents.

AVAILABILITY: Statewide (Subject to sufficient agency funds.)

ELIGIBILITY: All legally blind consumers who need and can benefit from the service.

WHERE TO APPLY: MCB Regional and Central Offices

METHOD OF DELIVERY: Purchased and Direct

SERVICE: Recreation/Campership

DEFINITION: A program of recreational services designed to meet the psycho-social and rehabilitative needs of the blind person on an individual or group basis. The program may be designed exclusively for blind individuals or it may be a program that incorporates the blind and the sighted. Because of a limited amount of Independent Living Social Service funds, the MCB will only provide up to a limit of \$ 500 per consumer towards the provision of recreation or campership services in any year.

In the case of camperships, the child's parents or legal guardians are responsible for informing the Children's Services Worker of their child's possible need for summer camp before June 1. Of those who apply before June 1, those who meet the financial eligibility requirements for Independent Living Social Services will be accorded priority. Parents will be encouraged to themselves investigate at least two alternative sources of funds to pay the camp fee and to inform the Children's Service Worker of the results of their investigation.

Because purchase of service moneys for camps is limited, Commission funds should not be expended for this service until all other private sources have been exhausted. All efforts to secure other funds must be documented in the consumer's case record. In addition to financial eligibility for camps, there are certain other eligibility criteria that must be met and documented before the Commission will purchase this service. Those criteria are as follows:

1. The provision of the service must be necessary for achievement of the consumer's Individual Service Plan.

2. The consumer will benefit - as a result of the service - in at least two of the following ways: socially, psychologically, and behaviorally.

3. The service should provide for an environment where the consumer's strengths will be enhanced.

4. The service may be provided in order to continue an ongoing rehabilitation and/or education program beyond the normal school year.

AVAILABILITY:

Statewide (Subject to sufficient agency funds)

ELIGIBILITY:

Legally blind individuals whose Individual Service Plan specifies this service as an objective and who meet the financial social services:

- Recipients of SSI-BL, SSI-DA, SSI-OAA, or TANF.**
- Income eligible persons, including persons on Medicaid, whose income is within the MCB limit.**

For consumers with a goal of protection from abuse, neglect, or exploitation, this service is provided regardless of income.

For services provided on a group basis.

- All legally blind consumers who need this service.**

WHERE TO APPLY;

MCB Regional and Central Office

METHOD OF DELIVERY:

Purchased (Alternative funding sources must be exhausted first.)

SERVICE: Rehabilitation Teaching

DEFINITION: A range of services in the areas of daily living skills, communication, and the use of leisure time. Evaluation of skill levels is conducted. Activities may include: assessing abilities and skills of consumer in specific areas, such as ADL/home management, personal care, communication, therapeutic recreational activities and then providing instruction in these areas when needed. Rehabilitation Teachers are also actively involved with on the job training and teaching computer skills to consumers. Rehabilitation teachers also provide consumer support and education related to the use of low-vision services. Pre-screening (including use of standardized, written assessment tools), encouragement, and provision of training in the use of prescribed low-vision devices and adaptive computer software may be provided as part of the rehabilitation teaching service. Demonstration of common non-prescription low vision aids may be provided.

AVAILABILITY: Statewide

ELIGIBILITY: All legally blind consumers who need this service.

WHERE TO APPLY: MCB Regional and Central Offices

METHOD OF DELIVERY: Direct

SERVICE: Respite Care

DEFINITION: A temporary service to provide relief for the family/primary caregiver of a disabled blind person. The service may be provided in the primary caregiver's home, in the respite worker's home, or in a residential facility that provides respite care. Priority will be given to those families where an emergency situation necessitating the caregiver's absence has occurred.

AVAILABILITY: Statewide, with the following restrictions:

- Subject to sufficient agency funds.
- Similar benefits must be exhausted before MCB funds can be accessed.
- Limited to a maximum of 48 hours per quarter (maximum 168 hours per year). If extraordinary circumstances are present, the Deputy Commissioner has the authority to waive the limit.

ELIGIBILITY:

- Families with legally blind individuals up to age 60 years who are not eligible for respite care services from other Agencies such as the Department of Public Health, Departments of Mental Retardation, and the Department of Social Services, or are eligible but have expended the maximum number of days available under that agency's funding.

- **Recipients of SSI-BI, SSI-DI, SSI-OAA, or TANF.**

WHERE TO APPLY: MCB Regional and Central Offices

METHOD OF DELIVERY: Purchased

SERVICE: Socialization Services for Legally Blind School-Age Children

DEFINITION: Provision of a program of 300 hours annually for legally blind school-age children who are under age 16. The goal of the program is for the children to develop appropriate social skills and self-confidence to facilitate their participation in integrated community recreation and enrichment programs.

AVAILABILITY: Statewide, subject to the availability of funds and contractual arrangements with vendors.

ELIGIBILITY: Legally blind children under the age of 16 who are attending school (grades 1 through 12) and who need this service.

WHERE TO APPLY: MCB Regional or Central Offices.

METHOD OF DELIVERY: Purchased

SERVICE: Support Services/Vision Utilization

DEFINITION: The provision of assistive listening devices and/or low vision aids/devices to eligible consumers.

Prescription devices must be deemed necessary by a physician or optometrist or audiologist and the aid/device is documented (in the ISP) as necessary to assist the consumer in achieving his/her highest degree of independent functioning. Closed circuit television devices (CCTV's) may be provided when necessary for independent living and when the consumer has been determined to have the necessary motivation and physical capacity to use the device successfully. Any CCTV provided will be the least expensive model that will enable the consumer to read. These services are termed "support" services because they are provided as an integral and subordinate part of primary services.

AVAILABILITY: Statewide (Availability of service subject to sufficient agency funds).

ELIGIBILITY: Legally blind persons who meet the financial eligibility requirements for independent living social services:

- Recipients of SSI-BI, SSI-DI, SSI-OAA, or TANF
- Income eligible persons, including persons on Medicaid, whose income is within the MCB limit.

For consumers with a goal of protection from abuse, neglect or exploitation, this service is provided regardless of income.

***See Additional Guidelines/Conditions on Page 15.**

WHERE TO APPLY: MCB Regional or Central Offices.

METHOD OF DELIVERY: Purchased

SERVICE: Transportation

DEFINITION: Provided where appropriate public or other transportation is not available, utilized to provide access to Specialized Recreation Services, Adjustment to Blindness Training Services or Low Vision Services, or Vision Utilization Services when one of these services is specified in the consumer's Individual Service Plan.

AVAILABILITY: Statewide (Availability of service subject to sufficient agency funds).

ELIGIBILITY: Legally blind persons who meet the financial eligibility requirements for Independent Living Social Services:

- Recipients of SSI-BI, SSI-DI, SSI-OAA, or TANF
- Income eligible persons, including persons on Medicaid, whose income is within the MCB limit.

For consumers with a goal of protection from abuse, neglect or exploitation, this service is provided regardless of income.

WHERE TO APPLY: MCB Regional and Central Offices

METHOD OF DELIVERY: Purchased and Direct